

according to the invention over different types of balls which were currently available. As indicated in the Declaration, the balls of the invention compared most favourably over a standard ball provided with a needlefelted outer cover. Moreover, the balls of the invention were found having the same overall quality as a woven fabric covered ball. Woven balls are usually considered by European players to provide better playing qualities than needlefelt ball, therefore this finding was highly unexpected.

Respectfully submitted,


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Enc - Declaration

Dated: February 20, 2002

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Kathleen Libby

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1 17. (Amended) A felt-covered ball, characterised in that the ball
2 is covered by a needlefelt produced by ~~the~~ a method as claimed in claim 1 of
3 forming a felt covering for a ball, characterised by the steps of forming a
4 needlefelt comprising an entanglement of fibres produced by needling a fibre batt
5 in a range of angles including a plurality of angles which are non-perpendicular
6 to the surface of the batt, and cutting or otherwise shaping the needlefelt to form
7 a blank adapted at least partially to cover a ball.

1 18. (Amended) A felt-covered ball, characterised in that the ball
2 is covered by a needlefelt ~~as claimed in claim 4,~~ said needlefelt comprising an
3 entanglement of fibres formed by the needlefelting of a fibre batt passed through
4 a needlefelting machine having at least one needleboard providing barbed
5 needles to penetrate the surface of said batt in a range of angles including a
6 plurality of angles which are non-perpendicular with respect to the surface of the
7 batt, and wherein said needlefelt is cut or otherwise shaped to form a blank
8 adapted at least partially to cover a ball.

Claims 1-13 and 22-25 have been cancelled.